

UASI Western Region Conference San Diego October 4-5, 2004

Eric Holdeman attended the Western Region Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Conference that was held for two days in San Diego, CA. The following are general notes that were taken during the various sessions. Do not consider these to be complete minutes of the proceedings. The conference was attended by ten representatives from the Seattle Urban Area. Two people from each of the core group (A.D. Vickery was a third from Seattle, but he was on a panel). There was also a representative from the Port of Seattle and KCDOT. The conference was to exchange lessons learned and improve implementation in the future.

Note: This was written after the conference. There is no way we (King County OEM) can do all the requirements of HLS without additional staff, or by contracting out service needs, and even then you need staff to procure, monitor and guide the contractors who are doing the work. This was a common concern expressed repeatedly by local jurisdictions attending the conference.

Suzanne Mencer, Director, Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness, ODP, DHS: Opening remarks. She is a direct report to Secretary Ridge. She spoke of the combining of grants, like the Fire Grants to combine all the grant making into one office. Not only did the grants move over, but the people who were working the program came over to ODP. She also stressed trying to simplify the grant application process with single application forms. A point was made that this is a national effort, not just a federal effort. "One team, one fight." They are looking to improve the process and she is open to suggestions on how to improve the existing system.

She made a strong pitch for regional collaboration within the urban areas. Much of the money has been spent on equipment. She sees the pendulum now shifting to training and then exercising. Information sharing is key for the future and for our collective success. She stressed involving citizens in our preparedness activities. It was noted that some major sport teams are training their employees on CERT. Lessons learned and a responder knowledge web sites are good repositories of information.

Terrorism is the weapon of choice today. It is not going to go away, and it requires a coordinated effort by all of us.

Demonstration of Information Sharing Tools from the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism: Web site was launched in April of this past year. This is a restricted site for professionals working on homeland security. There are lessons learned, best practices and good stories. Research priorities for original content is set by first responders. Nothing is posted on the site unless it is verified by subject matter experts (SME). www.llis.gov is the web site (Lessons Learned Information Sharing). Information comes from actual events and exercises. “Good Story”—is information that is not verified, but information submitted by people working in the field.

Responder Knowledge Base (RKB) first known as “Project Responder.” They sought to answer questions that first responders were asking. Things like “What’s out there? Has it been tested? Who else has used it? Does it work?”

Panel Discussion, Urban Area Representatives: A.D. Vickery spoke on the Seattle Urban Area experience. “Paint it red and put chrome on it and the fire service will buy it.” “Charge twice as much and law enforcement will buy it.” A good and funny quote! Stressed strategic planning and identifying what the needs of responders are. Having a state strategy helped. The experience of frequent natural disasters has forced us to work together on a regular basis. Existing mutual aid agreements helped. Some of the challenges have been the short suspenses to provide input. We need to work closer with public health. Yes, there is some competition, but we continue to be at the table and try to eliminate duplication. He stressed the need to continue partnering.

Rick Martinez, Sacramento, CA. Flooding in the 1990s helped them do combined city and county operations today (they have one EOC). UASI is a Task Force arrangement. He stressed that it is not easy maintaining a partnership with fire, law enforcement and public health. They have established a new training center that they will soon occupy. We need to be sure that we don’t yield to looking at just our discipline or jurisdiction. A regional approach is needed. He seconded the use of mutual aid and how that has broken down the walls. The establishment of counties as Operational Areas under the Standardized Emergency Management (SEMS) has dramatically helped in the coming together of jurisdictions and creating a dialog.

Carmen Vleasquez, Colorado State. [sorry, dealing with email issues]

Grayson Robinson, Sheriff, Arapahoe County (Denver). He talked about sustainability for the future. An all-hazards approach is needed. We are going to face natural disasters, and our work together will pay off there before we use the capability for terrorism. Need to tell our elected officials that the funding needs to continue. They have 24 agencies at the table. Still working together and learning to cooperate. Thinking regionally now, that was not the norm previously. Medical and hospitals are key partners in their UASI group. Community policing

has been an asset. Community outreach needs to continue. Need to assure them that we are spending their dollars to support them and keep them safe. For the future we need to exercise as realistically as possible. Radio interoperability continues to be a challenge. New integration of equipment is helping.

General discussion: Lots of discussion about taking an all-hazards approach to their activities. A question was asked about private business involvement. In Denver they have had a mall become CERT Certified. Private sector is doing quite a bit of business continuity training. Need to look at construction trades and how their talents can be incorporated. Working with the private sector and utilities needs a regional approach, single jurisdictions cannot take on these tasks of working with companies that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Portland: They, the city, administer the UASI funds.

Honolulu: They have included their public health and hospitals in their UASI Working Group.

San Jose: Tough balancing the needs of a complete program against continuing budget shortfalls at the state and county levels.

Oakland: They don't have their grant funds yet.

San Francisco: Good relationships with the FBI. Their population doubles during the day. They have a joint city and county OEM.

Las Vegas: They have had some issues with "misguided" help from legislators who want to pass legislation that is not wanted or helpful. Some people still are bringing Christmas wish lists to the table.

San Diego: The City established a separate Office of Homeland Security. Some places like San Diego have hired consultants to help with the threat assessment and strategic planning.

National Preparedness Goal, Lisa Weldon, Chief, Policy and Planning

Branch, ODP: HLSPDD-8 is the driver. National strategy for Homeland Security. Accompanies National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Response Plan (NRP). They are going to try and align statewide strategies. Federal performance measurements, relevant Federal regulatory requirements, annual report on nation's level of preparedness.

National strategy: "Federal, State, local and tribal entities will achieve and sustain nationally accepted risk-based target levels of capability for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery for major events, especially terrorism."

Standards are the next thing coming. There are ten identified mission areas. Need to measure preparedness. What does success look like? How do you define "readiness?" They are looking to tier the requirements based on the size and risk of the jurisdiction. Will be seeking input from first responders and other disciplines. Looking at a numeric system/measurement-not a color code. Another aspect is establishing a set of national planning scenarios, so that the

measurement (ruler) is the same. Here is a scary thought, “These are being done by the White House[!!!!!!]”

They (at this conference) keep talking about “national” not federal goals that have state, local and federal input. They are looking for a coordinated systems approach. All on the same page, building to the same end state.

NIMS, Gil Jamieson, Acting Director, National Incident Management System (NIMS) Integration Center: HSPD-5 called for the creation of NIMS and NRP. NIMS is a core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology, organizational processes and applicable to “All-hazards.” It is not an operational plan.

They are looking to have flexibility, standardization and some ongoing support via the NIMS Integration Center. They going to first look at existing standards, and what is under development.

Multi-agency Coordination Systems is another key aspect. He noted that NIMS is not just ICS. There is much more to NIMS. NIMS needs to be part of a larger capability. Training and exercises are important. Credentialing of personnel will be a major component. Publications management, e.g. naming and numbering conventions, identification of sources and suppliers, publication distribution.

Standards and Mutual Aid increasingly important. Credentialing calls for a documentation and database system related to qualification, certification, and credentialing of incident management personnel and organizations. Resource management process is another critical element. 120 resources have been typed. Grant guidance for FFY05 will allow funding to be used to inventory resources. They are also looking to help direct the development of new technologies.

[Note: FFY05 ODP guidance is going to be a thick document since it combines all the grants.]

FFY05 is to be used for state and local jurisdictions to ramp-up and be on board with NIMS as specified by the letter that was sent to Governors. It won't be until 2007 that there will be penalties for non-compliance. The burden of compliance is going to be put on States certifying that state and local jurisdictions are compliant.

NIMS Capability Assessment Support Tool (NIMCAST). Available on-line and deconstructs the NIMS document. Not mandatory to use it, but may be helpful. It has 518 elements to it.

DHS Initiatives: Moderator was Matt Bettenhausen, Director of State and Territorial Coordination, Office of State and Local Government coordination, DHS.

Regional technology Integration Initiative (Safe Cities): Nancy Suski, director, Emergency Preparedness and Response R&D, Science and Technology directorate. Looking to revolutionize how we do work and not just make incremental improvements. Looking to do some WMD equipment improvements. Using computer based integration for training. All-hazards was mentioned again in this presentation. The Seattle Urban Area is one of the four RTII cities that will be worked with in FFY05. She also talked about IMACC - Atmospheric Release Modeling. Looking to establish a single hazard prediction from Federal Agencies. So, multiple models may have input, but there will be one protective action recommendation from the feds.

RapidCom: Frank Lepage, Branch chief Information management and Preparedness Support, State and Local Operations Directorate, ODP. A near term approach. Focused on communications interoperability. Ten urban areas are being worked with. Seattle Urban area is not one of them.

Citizen Corps: Liz Digregorio, Director, Citizen Corps Program , state and Local Operations Directorate. ODP. Now part of state and local programs. They feel as though they are being integrated into “all” of the homeland security efforts at the federal level. Citizen Corps Councils (87) in the Western Region. Seventeen of them in the Seattle Urban Area. Want everyone to participate in the efforts of hometown security. You need to think of Citizen Corps Councils as a way to bring everyone to the table. Use what you have and make it work. There isn't a lot of dollars, but by being creative you can make it work. Some communities are using UASI dollars to support Citizen Corps. [Note: I caught up with her later and expressed my personal concern with the manner in which an attempt was made to mobilize and deploy Citizen Corps Volunteers to assist FEMA with Community Relations in the Southeast in response to the hurricanes.]

Standardized Awareness Authorized Trainer Program: Terra Flynn, ODP Training Division: 600K trained in the United States. Healthcare community has the largest population to be trained. Especially awareness training. Their number one priority was to get the standardized awareness training in the field. 3.5M responders across 10 disciplines need awareness training. There is an internet based version under development. Awareness curriculum is based on: recognize, avoid, isolate, and notify. State/UASI are to identify an interdisciplinary training team of between 30-50. initial delivery through TTT by NDPC. After the initial training of 106 classes, there will be two deliveries per year. There will also be a web based delivery of this training with TEEX doing the development. Lots of discussion/controversy on how DHS is rolling out training and changing requirements on the fly.

Panel Discussion: Overview of Homeland Security Preparedness Technical Assistance Program:

TA is “TA is a process of providing help to resolve a problem and/or create innovative programs...” TAs are provided free of charge with no impacts to UASI budgets. They have a HSPTAP Catalog available.

Emergency Response Synchronization Matrix Technical Assistance. Dave Brannegan, Preparedness Officer, Local Programs Division, State and Local Operations Directorate, ODP. Train UASI jurisdictions on the a systems-based planning philosophy and the Emergency Response Sync Matrix. Facilitate defined urban areas use of the concepts and software to develop a plan for a single threat response scenario. There is a graphical depiction of the response scheme. Ensures a response is integrated, coordinated, and synchronized. Guides a thorough review of existing plans and procedures. They see this as promoting the planning effort.

Starts with a Kick-off meeting, then a two-day Training Workshop, followed by an initial TA with a total of 4-6 month time frame. With a follow-on TA to evaluate the success of the TA.

****Enhancing Grants Management Capacities Technical Assistance:** Dave Brannegan, Preparedness Officer, Local Programs Division, State and Local Operations Directorate, ODP. Improve capabilities to manage and account for grant funds awarded by ODP. This comes from a finding that DHS should establish national standards for managing grant funding. And, that DHS should identify and distribute best practices in grant management. They can do a tailored on-site grant analysis process. This is a high priority for DHS.

COOP/COG Technical Assistance: Dave Brannegan, Preparedness Officer, Local Programs Division, State and Local Operations Directorate, ODP. Right now it is in a pilot stage [danger Wil Robinson]. Using web-based references, guidance, templates, workshops and writing assistance. All of this is based on existing DHS/FEMA guidance, minimizing duplicity and conflicts. Alaska is going through a pilot. Looking for state level work to be completed and online by late winter, 2005.

Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance: Frank LePage, Branch Chief, information Management and Preparedness Support, State and Local Operations Directorate, ODP. Lots of emphasis being put on interoperability of communications systems. ICTAP is working already in the Seattle Urban Area with Dan Hawkins, Search, is our local point of contact.

Mass Transit Technical Assistance: Larry Clark, Preparedness Officer, Information Management and Preparedness Support, State and Local Operations Directorate, ODP. Mass Transit has some unique challenges.

Spread out, few financial resources, impossible to protect all the assets, so you must prioritize needs. The question then is how best to use the limited financial resources available. ODP has created a Mass Transit Technical assistance Program. The program is designed to assist agencies in prioritizing their security strategies. Attempt to quantify risk in a manner that can be applied to security measures. Only UASI Transit agencies who received funding are eligible for the TA.

The steps in the process include:

1. Criticality Assessment
2. Threat Assessment
3. Vulnerability Assessment (done by folks back in D.C.)
4. Impact Assessment
5. A risk assessment follows
6. Response and Recovery Capabilities Assessment
7. Last step is a Needs Assessment

Concurrent Breakout Sessions, Enhancing Response and recovery

Capabilities: Chris Lombard, Seattle Fire Department and David Boughton, FEMA Region X, Dr. Susan Fernyak, Deputy Health Officer, director, Epidemiology, surveillance and Disease control (Public Health was not well represented at the conference) were part of the panel discussion.

Dr. Fernyak: Talked about the San Francisco experience. They have a combined city/county health office. She noted that there was a Hazmat testing section within PH. PH is on the working group for the UASI process. Their integration has been critical. There is significant cross discipline work that needs to be done on PH issues. This is not just about isolation and quarantine. They are hiring a physician and a nurse to just work with other government agencies to understand their issues that circle around health. Planning is the major function that they have supported and continue to do. Things like:

- Large scale epi investigations
- Isolation and quarantine
- Mass prophylaxis/SNS planning

She noted that they have limited “operational” capability to respond, and even to obtain the necessary training. They don’t have spare people to send them away to training (if training was available).

It was mentioned that anthrax detection systems are being put in large U.S. mail processing plants in the nation. These are being fielded in the next 18 months.

Chris Lombard: He has a communications background. He had a list of Seattle events that Seattle Fire had participated in, both locally and nationally. They are

trying to improve the communications in the region and from national resources. There are hardware issues and operational issues. Both need to be scalable.

- Overall, resolve the leadership vacuum by including all the players.
- Understanding the difference between crisis and consequence management.
- Training and exercising will help develop the relationships needed to respond in a coordinated manner.
- Emergency managers have been helpful in bringing people to the table

David Boughton: He is bringing a Response and Recovery perspective to this session. There will always be a bottom up approach to response. NIMS and NRP will be helpful, but not radically different from how they have operated previously. They are looking for standardization. Typing resources and credentialing will be part of the work. It will take time to put all of these in place. The American People and CNN are watching to see how effective we will be in preparing and responding.

Luncheon Speaker: , Jim Plehal, Business Liaison Director, Office of the Private Sector, DHS: They are a 15 person office that serves as the Ombudsman for the Private Sector. They are looking to establish and share best practices throughout the nation. He is a former Banker. They report directly to Secretary Ridge. They are working to encourage the private sector to protect themselves. Making a business case for spending time and dollars on this effort. Building trust between government and the private sector. Also looking at the critical infrastructure issue, since so much of it is in the private sector.

The private sector needs to be at the table to help with plans and methodology. There will be legal issues. How do you keep from being blamed for playing favors. Think about using the Chambers of Commerce, service clubs, universities, etc. The private sector will have tools and resources that can maybe help you. www.ready.business.gov **Look to use exercises to promote joint public and private efforts. He also advocated including the media in exercises. They too are part of the private sector.** If you work with the private sector, you will be connecting the private sector with one another, since they too are not as well networked as they need to be.

Ed Page, MTR (Marine Terrorism Response). [FYI, this group (Dick Fife) came and briefed at the last Region 6 Homeland Security Subcommittee meeting] There are mega ports with mega ships and mega impacts. A large ship today now carries 8,500 containers, a truck convoy that would be 50 miles long, end to end. Cruise ships carry 3,500 passengers, tankers carry 46M gallons of fuel. Los Angeles and Long Beach handles 14 million containers annually. Potential for loss of lives, property and environmental damages. The challenges include Mega impacts like: Bio, Chem and WMD Response. Mass casualty evacuations, protection of other vessels, restoration of trade.

Their approach was to meet with the Captain of the Port, CG District Commander, etc. Then there is work still to be done with other shore side regional partners. They are looking to expand the concept nationally. Developing terrorism response protocols. Looking to identify where resources are, and who has the authority to deploy them. They are looking at WebEOC as a tool. The idea is to use technology as a force multiplier. They are looking to have a full scale exercise in the Puget Sound Region (all ports) in the fall of 2005.

This completes my notes.